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Don't get Burned when Purchasing Firewood

Autumn is upon us, bringing with it not only a change in the color of foliage, but a change in the weather as well. As the State prepares for another cold winter, many money-conscious Coloradans are turning to the use of firewood as an alternative means of reducing heating costs. Consequently, consumer purchases of firewood will be increasing statewide.

Nick Brechun, Measurement Standards Program Administrator for CDA, encourages consumers when purchasing firewood to be aware that bulk firewood sellers in Colorado should provide a receipt with the seller's name and business address as well as the price, amount, and type of wood.

When firewood is purchased from bulk, the appropriate method of sale for this commodity is by the cord or fractional cord. The amount of wood in a cord consists of a neatly stacked volume of wood that equals 128 cubic feet. For example, one cord equals a stack of wood that is 4 feet wide by 4 feet high by 8 feet long. Brechun suggests that when a purchase is delivered, the buyer, with the seller present, should stack the wood in the manner described above to verify they received the amount they purchased.

Brechun cautions consumers against the purchase of firewood advertised by the face cord, fireplace cord, truckload, rick or pile. These terms do not have a uniform description, and do not allow the purchaser to make a value comparison. For instance, the size of one seller's truckload may be different than the size of the seller's competitor. Thus the consumer would have no way of knowing which would be the better buy.

Bundled firewood is commonly seen at grocery and convenience stores. The correct method of sale for bundles is the cubic foot. The actual amount of wood must meet the quantity declaration. Bundles must be properly labeled with net volume, wood type, and responsible party contact information. Department inspectors verify compliance at retail locations throughout Colorado.

The Inspection and Consumer Services Division of the CDA has 12 inspectors statewide who investigate complaints involving misrepresentation or mislabeling of firewood. Brechun adds, "One way of helping to ensure that the consumer receives what they pay for is for them to be knowledgeable about the product as well as the business they are buying from."

Contact the Measurement Standards Program at (303) 477-4220 with questions or for help in disputes regarding the sale of firewood. Firewood suppliers can be found under "Fuel Wood" in the Forest Product section of the [Colorado Food and Agricultural Directory](#) on the Internet.

In addition, the Colorado Department of Agriculture also participates with other agencies in the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) program which involves the early detection of exotic pests that threaten Colorado's agriculture and environment. Such pests may be found on firewood and if transported, can result in the spread of harmful insects and the destruction of trees. Further information regarding how you can protect Colorado's forests can be found at the [Division of Plant Industry](#) Web site or by clicking the "[Burn It Where You Buy It!](#)" link for more details.